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secret, I believe, that the author of the "Letters to Living Artists" is Mr. J. Gleeson White, an occasional contributor to the columns of *The Art Amateur*.

* * *

THERE was no little merriment at the Fifth Avenue Art Galleries on the "press day" of the Society of American Artists' exhibition. Among those who made the tour of the rooms was a well-dressed stranger who, after conscientiously putting his nose close against every canvas, and every now and again referring to his catalogue with puzzled expression, was about to leave when a thought seemed to strike him. He went up to the custodian of the catalogues and in sober earnestness, said: "Excuse me, madam, but I should like to know if these are *all* the work of amateurs?" I did not hear the answer. "Who *is* that man?" asked Mr. Chase. "A critic, of course," said some one. "From *The Times*?" suggested another. A reference was made to the stranger's credentials, and he proved to be the representative of *The American Angler*. MONTEZUMA.

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARTISTS' EXHIBITION.

MR. SARGENT is undoubtedly the hero of this exhibition, although he has done better things than any of the seven very clever canvases he shows here. At the head of them is the dashing sketch of "La Carmencita," which, however, seems to suffer from two causes—too much haste and "trop d'esprit." In addition to his lack of time, the artist was possessed by other suggestions than those his model offered him; he was thinking of Velasquez and Goya, and Castilian romances and fans and daggers. Consequently, in this white-faced, painted, mysterious, evil-looking beauty, with her hands on her hips, her head thrown back and her magnificent yellow dress, he has suggested a whole lot of things that Carmencita herself suggests only vaguely, if at all, and omitted a number of more human and attractive ones that she really possesses. Of the skill with which he has rendered the subject, as he chose to see it, there can be only one opinion. It is amazingly clever; but it is not Carmencita. Of another character is the half-length of a lady—whether American or Japanese it is hard to say—black-haired and black-browed, leaning forward, with her arms akimbo, her face very much alive and her brownish-gray gown shot with violet reflections. Anything more alert, spirited and active it would be difficult to paint; but, for the sake of the lady and her friends, it is to be hoped that her incognita will be preserved. Mr. Sargent's other portraits include the head of Georg Henschel, the singer, with nostril inordinately distended—noticed on its appearance at the Royal Academy last summer; "Master Caspar Goodrich," frankly and charmingly painted; a very pleasant little girl, with inky hair and a fresh childish skin; and, lastly, Mr. George Vanderbilt, an amazing piece of brush work, but, viewed as a portrait, dashed in with such brutality that it falls little short of a caricature. The gentleman is holding a book up to his cheek, the red edges of which are made to match his lips and furnish the high note for the whole composition. Mr. Sargent also sends his "Summer Morning," recently shown at one of the Union League Club exhibitions, with its vivid rendering of white dress and blue water in sunshine and shade.

Mr. Thayer's exhibit probably compares better with this very important one than any other in the collection; but two, if not three, of his works may be considered as variations on one theme, the pale, mystical, unlovely face of a young woman, idealized in color and sentiment if not in drawing. In the largest of these, the pale-eyed sitter, seen at half length, is arranging some purple flowers in a glass vase and turns her head to look at the spectator. The pose is a trifle stiff and the face is much more spiritual than womanly, but the white dress is a marvel of color and quality, and the curious artistic distinction which Mr. Thayer always knows how to confer is here strongly manifest. The second in size of these heads shows a face younger and rounder; the drapery that covers the bust is of a pale reddish yellow gray. The architectural Renaissance frame that encloses this study seems out of character. The third of these portraits is smaller still and probably somewhat more faithful to the sitter's expression. Mr. Thayer also exhibits an exquisitely painted flower-piece, pale pink roses in a gray jar.

Mr. Dewing sends only one of his small, refined portraits—a lady in black, distinguished in pose and features. Mr.

Chase has several small canvases, but among them are no portraits. The largest is a view on a sunny lawn with a lady in reds and a baby in white; the others are grayish or greenish landscape studies, a lady with a book under the trees, and a gray strong study of the figure of a mourning woman. Mr. Weir sends a small painting of roses and an excellent little lamp-lit scene, with beautiful quality in the blacks, of a lady reading. Among the portraits are a large one, with spirited brush, work by Mr. Beckwith, and a faithful one as to likeness by Mr. Coffin. A second portrait by Mr. Beckwith—a smaller canvas—shows a brilliant brunette turning her head and looking archly at the spectator. The accessories of cushions and background are sumptuous almost to gorgeousness, but are well managed, so as to enhance rather than detract from the rich complexion of the sitter. Howard Russell Butler's spirited portrait of Charles Collins—florid, white haired and vigorous, wearing a seal-skin trimmed overcoat and holding up a gold-headed cane—is handsome in color and altogether a capital bit of painting. To the left of the Carmencita, like a pale reflection, hangs a portrait of a young lady by Edmund Tarbell, with a yellow dress, and a white fur opera cloak over her shoulders. The graceful young head is well drawn, but the cheeks are very pink and the arms are rather slight in color and modelling. Another half-length life size of a seated figure is that by Dennis Bunker, which hangs in the centre of the north wall; but here the superabundance of red has been transferred to the nose of the lady, who looks in her hand mirror. Frank Benson's portrait of a young girl in pink, with some pink roses, is only interesting in color; Edward A. Bell sends from the Paris Exposition a "Portrait Study of a Lady in Gray," seen at full length against a paler curtain, and Miss Rosalie Gill, from the same great show, her "Orchid," which is more interesting. Here the subject is a handsome, auburn-haired mother, in a thin black dress trimmed with violet, and whose baby in white, pressed against her breast, holds up a great violet-colored orchid. The mother's nose is a trifle short for beauty; but the canvas remains one of the important ones of the exhibition. To the right of the Carmencita hangs a pleasant portrait of a girl in a green dress, seated and seen in profile, by Irving R. Wiles; at the other end of the room, a half-life size of another young woman in yellow, at her piano, by Joseph De Camp; in the middle of the room, another, ditto, ditto, but much more strongly painted, by W. S. Allen; and in the inner gallery a study all in grays of a third, seen at full length and standing, by Walter MacEwen. Of the smaller portraits, two of the best are Louis Loeb's head of his mother and Cecilia Beaux's of Edward C. Biddle, of Philadelphia.

The American figure painter, as is well known, is not given to historical compositions of any kind, excepting an occasional battle piece or domestic scene, nor to mythological subjects excepting studies of single figures much miscalled by the names of certain divinities, and his highest flights of imagination and composition are generally reserved for certain more or less awkward arrangements of lightly clad figures in a more or less idealized atmosphere and landscape. There are a half dozen or more of these various compositions at the Academy exhibition, but the tendency of the Society appears to be to discourage anything more ambitious than the study of the "morceau," in man and nature, and there are only one or two in the present exhibition, and only one of any importance. Mr. Denman's small "Summer" is well intentioned, but good only in the background painting, and Kenyon Cox's large "Eclogue" is probably the best of its kind that he has done, but still lacking in idyllic ease. In the foreground of his harvest field, warm with the late afternoon light, are a group of nymphs, some nude and some slightly clad, and in the distance the shepherd approaches. This picture and the "Birth of Venus" were recently shown at an exhibition of the Union League Club, but the "Eclogue" is rather better lit in its present situation. Its great virtue is its pleasant warm color; the nymphs are generally well drawn, but they are not at their ease. It is plain that they are not to be used in Arcadia, although where else they belong we cannot say; the reds of the hair of two of them are of a color certainly unknown in every-day life. The "Venus" is a very conscientious study of the back of a nude figure, but the title is a misnomer; and as for the naked young woman called "Diana," she is a libel on her namesake, whom mythology represents as the embodiment of chastity. Evidently she has just dropped her corsets in order to pose

for the artist, and has never filled her chest by chasing the deer or any other healthful exercise. Mr. Low's version of the same goddess is chaste enough, but is uninteresting. His second picture shows the Greek girl of the legend, who traced the profile of her lover's shadow on the wall, and so produced "The First Portrait." Mr. Fitz's "Reflection," in which another nymph stands over a clear stream, is rather brown in the flesh tones. Mr. Shirlaw's "Psyche" shows her back, beautifully modelled; the flesh painting is cool and gray—quite in contrast to the Rubens-like richness of his "Rufina," noticed lately. Theodore Earl Butler contributes a nude study; he calls it "Youth." The canvas is here much larger; the naiad sits at the foot of a tree in mysterious forest gloom, and a stripling stands beside her. They are doing nothing in particular, but they seem to be doing it very naturally.

The influence of the Impressionists is strongly shown in many of the landscapes, in a few of them so strongly that the spectator is forcibly warned to stand farther off under penalty of his own discomfort. At the proper distance, however, all these high-colored paintings fall into a greater or less truthfulness of aspect, and in some of them excellent qualities of light and texture make themselves manifest. Among the most skilful and moderate of these workmen is Childe Hassam, who contributes two spirited, summarily treated street scenes, one in Paris and one in New York, and a large, very serious composition, "The Enchanted Hour," the edge of a little village with some hay-stacks and a wonderfully pale, clear, high light on everything. Mr. Boggs, in addition to a small study in New York Harbor, sends a large view of the Brooklyn Bridge, not nearly so large as the one M. Renouf executed a year or two ago, but much better. Instead of giving the whole length of the structure, like an architect, he has foreshortened it, and thereby secured a composition instead of a plan, and instead of M. Renouf's somewhat conventional rosy light he has rendered a fresh, bright morning effect, the upward slant of the clouds contrasting well with the lines of the bridge. Another of the good paintings of the exhibition is the large marine, "Surf and Fog," one of the last works executed by Robert A. Eichelberger, a painter full of promise, who died only a few days before the opening of the exhibition. Mr. Blum sends only a spirited, accurate study of the "Ca d'Oro" of Venice; and Mr. Bolton Jones one of his characteristic works, "Back of the Sand Dunes." For justness, spirit and right feeling it would be difficult to find a better rendering of a piece of nature than this honest and able little study; if only the sky were as good as the ground, this painting would be entirely admirable. The number of good landscapes, however, is much too long to give here. We must mention, however, Mr. Coffin's conscientious rendering of a difficult effect of light after a thunder-storm, and an excellent example of Leonard Ochtman's work, which is surely bringing him to the front rank of our landscape painters.

Of the sculpture, the most interesting examples are Mr. Kemeys's little plaster sketches of animals. In one, the "Soul of Contentment" is personified by a bear lolling on his back and sucking one of his paws; in another, a boa has taken a neat turn around the neck of a jaguar, and the great cat is protesting with such concentrated power that the chances are rather in his favor; and in a third two bison bulls have it out to the death. Of the mere conventional work, there are Mr. Elwell's fleshly, voluptuous bust, "L' Africaine," and his plaster study for the bust of Vice-President Morton for the Senate Chamber at Washington; a pretty head of a little girl with very long curls, by Philip Marting, and a much smaller one of another child, beautifully modelled, by Mr. Hartley; and that of a handsome woman in evening dress by Daniel C. French.

To sum up, the exhibition is very attractive, and, so far as concerns the technical skill displayed, we think the best ever held by the Society; but it must be confessed that it shows no signs of any effort toward a loftier, a more imaginative or a more ingenious art. In previous exhibitions most of the prominent members of the Society have made more or less serious attempts to do that which every other school of national art does, apply the technical skill acquired to the production of a dignified academical composition. Here, what is there to point to of this kind? Comparison with any of the European schools, even outside the French, would show our weakness in this respect. The first requirement of a painter undoubtedly is to paint well. This we have learned, and here we have rested.

THE PASTEL EXHIBITION.

THE fourth exhibition of the smallest of the artistic societies, that of the "Painters in Pastel," was held in Wunderlich's gallery from May 1st to the 24th. It was very well worth seeing. There were eighty-nine works hung, not one of which was not interesting in some way, and the varieties of interest and of subjects were notable. It might have been thought that these experts had set themselves to demonstrate the general artistic utility of the medium in which they worked. Figures, flowers, portraits and landscapes were all well represented, and the seriousness and accuracy of modelling in many of the studies were worthy of the most dignified medium and were surprising in pastel, generally supposed to be only a frivolous and decorative. An attractive feature were the small figure compositions by Childe Hassam, who has made prodigious progress within the last year or two. There were three very spirited little pictures representing scenes at the Grand Prix de Paris, a "September Afternoon from a Paris Café," a charming view in the opening into the Bois de Boulogne, a sketch in a New York blizzard, and a small study of a girl's head "At the Races." Considering that this was the artist's first essay in pastels, his success with the medium is remarkable. "The Grand Prix" studies were comparable with similar bits by De Nittis; the atmospheric qualities, the color tones, were not only excellent, but there was also demonstrated an ability to render the character and style of "mondains" and "mondaines" in which the American painter generally fails. But this has never been a difficult matter with Mr. Hassam. If we have any fault to find with him it is that he is too Parisian in his New York and Boston street scenes. The view of the "Bois" and the blizzard scene were particularly pleasant in color. Of the other numerous studies of ladies, none were quite so "citified" as Mr. Hassam's, though some of Mr. Chase's, Mr. Beckwith's and Mr. Wiles's were very good. Mr. Frank Jones's "Sketch" of a girl in white draperies—under which her body was neatly suggested—was evidently done from a model. His two old-fashioned young women having a "Quiet Talk" were rather pale both in color and quality. Francis Day represented the back of a lady in black, reading at a very small tea-table, while a big tawny hound sat by in "Patience," and also a "Somnambulist" wandering in her white draperies over a field in the moonlight, the sleeping village being discernible in the valley below. Of Mr. Beckwith's numerous small studies of half-length ladies the best was probably the one in the bluish-green dress in "A Color Note," though the large picture, "The Gray Gown," a study in the open fields, was very interesting. His most serious work, perhaps, was the study of an elderly lady in black, seen in profile and knitting.

Mr. Chase's exhibit led off with his excellent portrait of Mr. J. Henry Harper, which had the post of honor. The flesh tones seemed a trifle gray against the handsome raspberry-colored plush curtain, but the pose, the drawing and the character were very good, and the various textures rendered with rare skill. There was also a portrait of "Little Miss H.," with a serious infantile expression and a Japanese doll, the rounded back of whose bald head was a triumph of technic; the large "Afternoon by the Sea," which had been seen before, and three or four others, the best of which was the study of a black-haired model, in a gray Japanese robe and holding a pink fan, contemplating herself in a mirror. The quality of pastels seems to be specially adapted to the rendering of grays in skilful hands, and Mr. Chase has a decided talent in this way, as may be seen by Mr. Harper's trousers. Another theme which seems to have an especial attraction, for these painters at least, is the smooth and pretty back of the neck of a young woman, and there were many such studies in the exhibition. That of Mr. Wiles's lady in green, "Improvising," was one of the best. Mr. Weir's most important contribution, "The Window Seat," represented a young girl seated and looking out through the casements at the green fields; it was very refined in treatment, but the grays of her drapery and of the wall were rather too much alike in quality.

Of the numerous portraits and studies of heads none were better than Benoni Irwin's serious one of a man leaning his cheek on his hand, solid and true in the modelling, just in the local tones and full of character and life. Cecilia Beaux's young girl with a dog under her arm might have been as good if her model had had more character. Caroline T. Hecker, Augusta Berg, Theodore Robinson, Edith Sackett, Louis Bronberg, Rosina

Emmet Sherwood and Maria Brooks all contributed studies of heads—mostly of young women—of varying degrees of interest and excellence. Miss Hecker, who is full of talent, also sent two charming flower studies, "Daffodils" and "Roses;" the latter, pale pinkish and yellowish ones in a greenish glass, being worthy of Mr. Weir. Henry O. Walker's nude study—the only one in the exhibition—was of that pretty boy, this time with a bow and arrow, whose frequent appearance is getting a little tiresome.

The landscapes were numerous and varied, Mr. Twachtman's being much the most numerous and the most sketchy. Most of them were executed on dark paper and with the greatest apparent economy of labor, some of them, it must be confessed, being rather slight and uninspiring. Occasionally there was one, as the pale little picture called "The Brook," which was quite idyllic in its simplicity and quietness. All, it need hardly be said, were clever, and had they been signed with the Whistlerian "butterfly," it would have seemed all right. Bolton Jones sent five landscapes, the most important being a very true study of the "Edge of a Marsh." In this, however, as in many of the other exhibits, it was a matter of some surprise to see the recklessness with which the stamp of the Society—the vivid, vermilion "P. P."—was stuck on many of these pale grayish studies, a high note for which they had evidently not been prepared and which was somewhat disastrous to some of them. Walter Palmer contributed a large and well handled sunny harvest scene, "Wheat and Poppies," especially commendable in its rendering of the sky; Charles Warren Eaton, two quiet little scenes hung too high to be seen through the reflections on the glasses which covered them, and Carlton T. Chapman and Otto H. Bacher, some of the best of the marines and landscapes. The little "Shrewsbury, 4 A. M.," of the latter was very pretty in its rendering of the shimmering early light on the waters of the bay, and the blue, hazy hills of his "Landscape" also true and pleasant to see. Mr. Chapman repeated in pastels the motive which he has executed before in oils or water-colors, the bow of a white ship, with a green water line, lying in harbor; his "Morning Mists" was capital in color, and the "Fresh Breeze" on the open sea had all the richness and freshness of color of oils. Robert Reid and Theodore Robinson represented the Impressionists—the latter very Monet-ish, with his effect of blue against purple, a boy in a blouse relieved against the reflections of a still reach of the Seine, that was ingenious and artistic if not literally true. Mr. Reid's peasant woman and child resting in the "Afternoon Sunshine" seemed to be wrong as to the time of day, the cobalt shadows in which they were flooded suggesting an earlier hour. There were other contributors whose works were not quite so worthy of attention as those mentioned, but none that had not something to say in a more or less modest way, and the exhibition, as a whole, was so clever that the absence even of Mr. Blum, the President, was scarcely perceived.

A PORTRAIT SKETCH OF COROT.

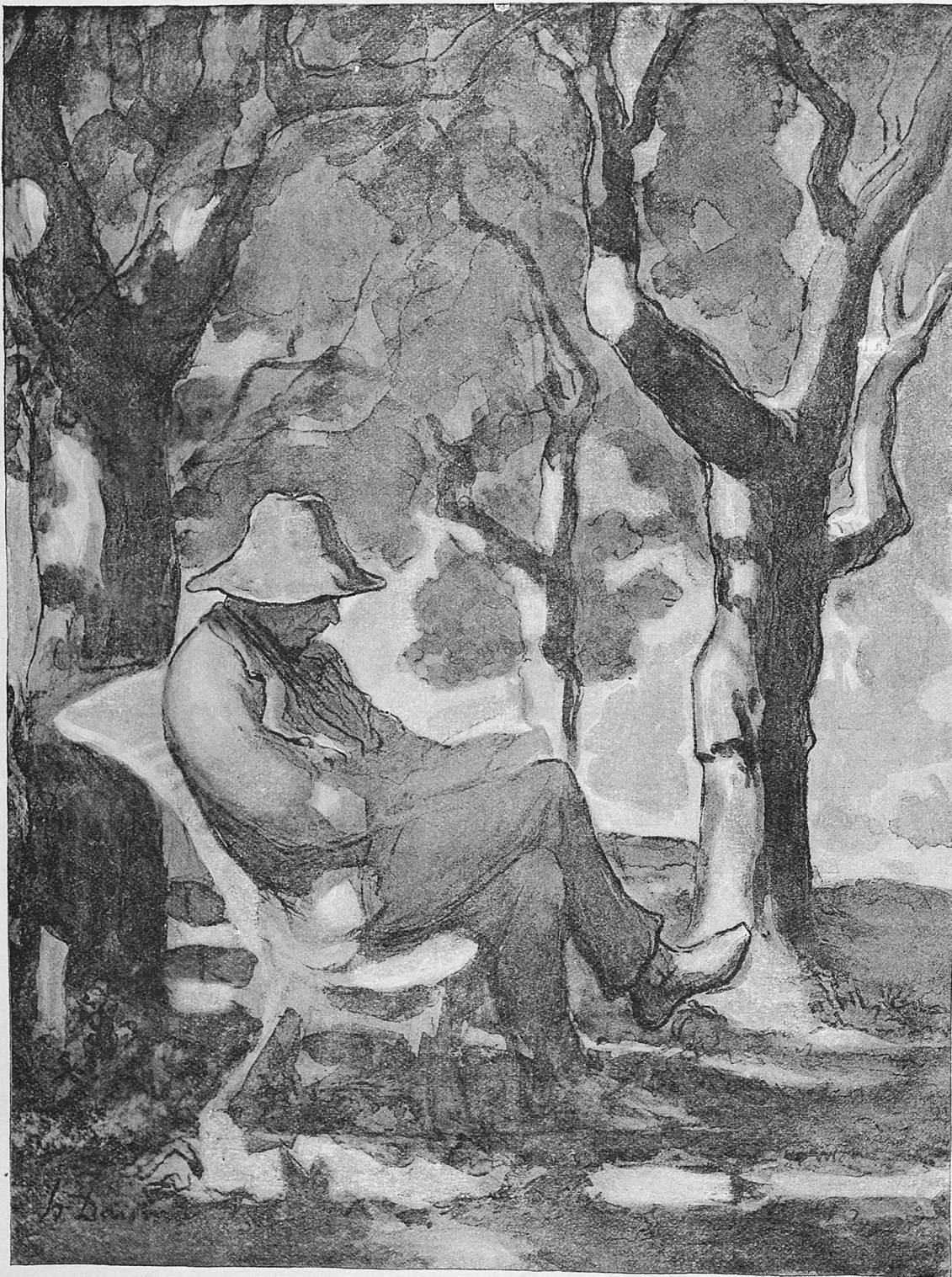
ON the opposite page we reproduce, according to promise, the portrait sketch of Corot, by Daumier, the original of which was shown by Mr. Durand-Ruel at the last exhibition at the Union League Club. Slight as it is—only a few quickly-drawn outlines dashed in with a quill pen and worked over with a brush full of water-color—for the artistic reader it is full of interest. Good old "Père Corot," in his big straw garden hat, is enjoying his ease in his orchard, seemingly as unconscious that he is being "taken" as if he had lived in the present days of detective cameras, when no one is safe from the predatory lens of the photographer. We get here a new impression of the painter of the "Orpheus," "The Dance of the Nymphs," and all those other idyllic, silvery landscapes inseparably connected with the name of this delightful old master of the Barbizon School. As for his glorious old friend, Honoré Daumier, to whose facile pen we are indebted for this pleasant souvenir of a summer day, we hope before long to have something to say commensurate to his genius. Daumier was much more than a clever cartoonist, which is the rôle in which he is probably best known to our readers. He combined the qualities of artist and moralist to a rare degree. Above all, he was a man of heart. Two more congenial cronies than Corot and Daumier it would have been hard to find, and it is pleasant to think of them together at Barbizon.

THE LA FARGE EXHIBITION.

THE La Farge exhibition at Reichardt's gallery, opened April 21st, was one of the most interesting of the season's special exhibitions. It included many of the drawings made in Japan for the series of papers now appearing in The Century Magazine. Some of these were in water-colors, some in monochrome and a few in crayon. Of the water-colors, a drawing of a corner of a Japanese garden, with a little waterfall slipping over some rocks into a rustic basin shaded by a drooping willow, was one of the best. A little figure of a Japanese operatic dancer, masked and completely swathed in rich brocades, was particularly fine as an arrangement of low tones of color. In two sketches made on the Pacific, the sapphire lines of blue sea water were exquisitely reproduced. A large part of the exhibition was made up of studies and sketches for decorative work. These were in a variety of media, but, taken on their own merits, the water-colors were the best. A drawing about one fourth the size of life for the figure of Isaiah in Trinity Church, Boston, was one of the boldest and most successful. A much smaller drawing, "Noli me tangere," was a complete composition, the figures of Christ and the Magdalen, the former in pale red, relieved against a landscape background of dull greens and blues and a purplish evening sky.

In his flower studies Mr. La Farge's unique qualities as a colorist are most apparent. Several paintings of water-lilies were unequalled for purity of tone, the varied silvery grays of the petals imitated by bold combinations of pale washes of positive colors. These flower pieces might be referred to as striking examples of the fact that an artist can display invention and imagination in the most realistic study from nature. In a drawing of "Wild Roses," for instance, the key-note is given by a flower at the apex of the group which is painted in Chinese vermilion, a color which, it is safe to say, has never been seen in a wild rose. But here it is so supported by the other tints employed as to appear only a somewhat livelier hue than ordinary. It is true that anybody can make such experiments, but it requires a vivid imagination to foresee the result, and a sure taste and accurate judgment to order it rightly.

Mr. La Farge's work in other media than water-colors cannot be judged of by the specimens shown. Two flower studies in wax paint are of interest chiefly as showing a tendency in that medium to sink all middle and dark tones in blackish masses. In a few decorative studies of the same date, wax, oil and water-colors were used together, and, paradoxical as it may seem, these have lasted much better. The reason is to be found in the fact that the different media were not mixed, nor to any extent superposed. In a large study, for tapestry, of a festoon of fruits and flowers, water-colors were used wherever transparent washes were required; oil paints, where a greater body of transparent color was necessary, as in the seeds of some pomegranates and the shadowed parts of foliage; wax only where solidity and opacity were desired. Finally, the background was covered down with silver paint. The cartoon is therefore a mosaic of different kinds of painting; each being applied with an understanding of such changes as it is liable to, and without mixture, it has scarcely deteriorated, and is now probably safe against further alteration. The oil paintings appeared to have suffered most, owing, we have no doubt, to their having been much worked upon at odd times. Each time that a picture was taken up, the artist must have given it a rub of oil to bring out the deadened colors. These many films of oil, applied now here, now there, have oxidized, and, as a consequence, the paintings have become "foxed" unequally, not only destroying all the fresher and more delicate tones of color, but producing an unpleasant patchiness. The first impression is of hesitating and uneven handiwork, which is removed on a close inspection, but is renewed as one retires from the picture. Still the principal oil painting, "Christ and Nicodemus," has preserved much of its beauty. It was painted in part as a study of the contrast of moonlight and lamplight. The moonlight has disappeared, but the effect of lamplight on the red and orange of Nicodemus's cloak and tunic remains. The composition is a noble one, and, as in all of the artist's decorative works, is impressive by the arrangement of its masses. Facial expression is almost lacking, the painter being evidently aware that in works of this character it must either be exaggerated or remain ineffective.



FACSIMILE OF A WASHED PEN SKETCH, BY HONORÉ DAUMIER OF JEAN BAPTISTE CAMILLE COROT.

REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF MR. DURAND-RUEL.